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REMARKS

In the Office Action dated March 1, 2005, claim 16 is objected to. Claims 1-9, 12-23, 25-28, and 31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Claims 10, 11, 24, 29, and 32 are objected to, but indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Accordingly, certain claims have been amended to more specifically define the features of Applicant's invention. For the reasons set forth hereafter, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention set forth in the claims patentably defines over the cited references. Reconsideration is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Applicant's attorney would like to thank Patent Examiner D. Bochna for his time and courtesy extended during a personal interview conducted on May 19, 2005. During the interview, proposed amendments to the claims, in particular, to claim 1, were discussed with the Examiner.

Claim 16 is objected to. Claim 16 has been amended to provide proper antecedent basis for all claim features.

Claims 1-6, 13-16, 26-28, and 31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Washizu. The Examiner contends that Washizu teaches all of the features of Applicant's invention.

However, it is respectfully submitted that Washizu lacks a biasing means on the top hat for biasing the top hat to the first position. In Washizu, the sleeve 37 includes a tapered, conical surface which interacts with the spring retainer to enable the sleeve to be urged axially inward with respect to the connector housing upon insertion engagement with an endform during insertion of the endform into the housing. The tapered, conical surface forces the wire retainer radially outward allowing passage of the sleeve past the retainer until the axially endwall of the sleeve passes the retainer at which time the retainer snaps back into a latched position holding the sleeve and the endform in the housing.

The tapered, conical surface in Washizu does not in and of itself form a biasing means which biases the sleeve to the first position blocking radially inward

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movement of the retainer to the second, latched position. Washizu is devoid of any element or feature on the sleeve which forms the function of a biasing means.

For this reason, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention set forth in claims 1, 26, and 31, and the claims depending respectively therefrom, includes features which are not anticipated by Washizu.

With respect to claim 3, it is pointed out that the Examiner contends that the biasing means in Washizu is biasing member 20b and contends that it is monolithically formed on the top hat. With respect to claim 4, the Examiner contends that the biasing means comprises at least one spring arm 37b. Clearly Washizu teaches the spring arm 37b as being on the wire retainer and not formed on the top hat.

Claims 1-9, 12-23, 25, 31, and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Szabo, US Patent No. 5,863,077. The Examiner contends that Szabo teaches all the features of Applicant's invention set forth in the enumerated claims. The Examiner contends that Szabo teaches a top hat 80 which is movable between first and second positions.

However, the Examiner is misinterpreting what constitutes a top hat as Szabo clearly shows a top hat 34 which functions to maintain the seals in the bore in the connector housing. The top hat 34, once inserted into the housing, is immovable and does not shift positions based on contact with an inserted endform.

Since Szabo lacks any teaching of biasing means unitarily formed on or monolithically carried on the top hat, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention as set forth in claims 1, 17, and 31, and the claims depending respectively therefrom, includes features which are not anticipated by Szabo.

New claims 34-39 are added in dependency of independent claims 1, 17, and 31. Such claims define features which have full antecedent basis and support in the original specification and drawings. Such claims are submitted to patentably define over the cited references since the cited references are devoid any teaching of the features of such claims.

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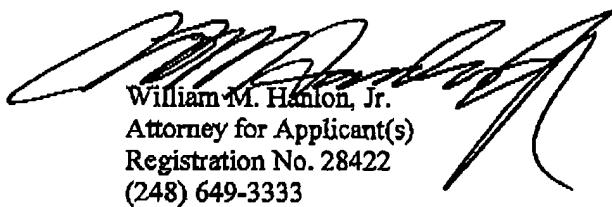
Claims 10, 11, 24, 29, and 30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but are indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Accordingly, claims 10, 24, and 29 are amended to independent form including all of the features of the respective original base claim and intervening dependent claims. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claims 10, 11, 24, 29, and 31 are allowable.

In summary, for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention set forth in claims 1, 3-9, 12-23, 25-28, and 31-33, as well as new claims 34-39, includes features which are not anticipated by the cited references. These claims are submitted to be in condition for allowance along with the already indicated allowable claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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